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RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC//DDI/OEA//
RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//FPA//
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC//DB-Z//
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 0568
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 7000
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 7060
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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; December 2, 2009

TOP HEADLINES

Chosun Ilbo
All-out ROKG Pressure on Public Sector Labor Unions; Police Raid
Railway, Civil Servants Union Offices,
Seek to Arrest Leaders

JoongAng Ilbo, Segye Ilbo, Seoul Shinmun
Rail Strike is Declared Illegal

Dong-a Ilbo
[1](#)N. Korea's Currency Reform Sparks Chaos;
Business Transactions Practically Come to a Halt

Hankook Ilbo
U.S. to Send 34,000 More Troops to Afghanistan

Hankyoreh Shinmun
Lee Myung-bak Administration Cracking Down
on Public Sector Labor Unions

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

President Barack Obama will announce his new Afghan strategy today
which calls for sending 30,000 to 35,000 more U.S. troops to
Afghanistan. (All)

Many security experts, however, view President Obama's decision with
skepticism or outright opposition, calling it a "historical
mistake." (Chosun)

According to China's state-run Xinhua News Agency, North Korea
yesterday informed foreign diplomats in the capital Pyongyang that
its old currency will no longer be used and that the old bills will
be exchanged for new ones between Nov. 30 and Dec. 6. (Chosun,
Segye)

MEDIA ANALYSIS

-President Obama's speech on Afghanistan

All ROK media led their international news section with a report on President Obama's upcoming speech on Afghanistan.

Conservative Chosun Ilbo noted that this is the second increase following the 21,000 additional troops President Obama dispatched earlier this year, and commented: "President Obama is also calling for 5,000 to 6,000 more troops from NATO countries other than Britain. However, no country except Britain, which promised 500 new U.K. troops to the war zone, is willing to accept his request. ... There are (also) many security experts who firmly believe that President Obama's Afghan war plan is a "historical mistake."

Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo wrote in the headline: "Obama to Send 34,000 More Troops...Obama's Afghan 'Gambit;' 'Don't Repeat Vietnam in Afghanistan' More Troops, More Quickly." Moderate Hankook Ilbo's headline read: "(Obama) Stresses Troop Increase for Withdrawal... 'Exit Strategy' to Allay Negative Perceptions"

Left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun editorialized: "President Obama's choice is unrealistic and lacks justification. ... The indiscriminate U.S. military campaign in Afghanistan has bred Taliban forces and turned all Afghan people into an enemy. In particular, by supporting a corrupt local government and playing it off against resisting forces, the U.S. is making the Afghan war into a second Vietnam War. Isn't this why Karl Eikenberry, a retired U.S. Lieutenant-General and current U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan,

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publicly said that troop increases will only invite resistance from Afghans and that civilian workers should be dispatched instead? ... The ROKG should reconsider its plan to redeploy Korean troops to the war torn country."

OPINIONS/EDITORIALS

U.S. ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL TROOP DEPLOYMENT AND ROK'S DECISION ON REDEPLOYMENT REMAINS CONTROVERSIAL
(Munhwa Ilbo, December 2, Page 39)

On December 2, U.S. President Obama delivered a speech to the U.S. public on his plan for Afghanistan for the first time since taking office. In the speech, President Obama announced that the U.S. will send additional troops to Afghanistan, adding, "After 18 months, our troops will begin to come home." It is noteworthy that President Obama chose to make his speech at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He reaffirmed his commitment to putting an end to the Afghan war which was initiated shortly after the September 11 terror attacks.

It seems that President Obama has staked his political career on the Afghan war. In particular, he may want to be reelected in 2012 by bringing the Afghan war to a successful conclusion. But the (U.S.) Democratic Party and a significant number of Americans are still staunchly opposed to additional troop deployment, citing the (tremendous) cost of the war. However, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member countries are expected to fall in step with Obama's new Afghan strategy by pledging to increase their troop levels in Afghanistan. In laying out his Afghan strategy, Obama said that the additional troop dispatch will benefit the national interest of the U.S. and promote the great cause of world peace.

The ROKG has also publicly said at home and abroad that it will expand the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) from its current 25 members to 120 or 130 members and send 300 to 400 troops to protect the team; the Administration plans to submit the troop dispatch bill to the National Assembly this year. The bill is likely to face strong opposition, however, because the opposition (ROK) Democratic Party officially decided on November 24 to oppose any redeployment of troops. In 2007, when the Democratic government was in power, 23 aid workers from an ROK church were abducted by a terrorist group in Afghanistan and two of them were killed, prompting the Roh Moo-hyun Administration to withdraw ROK troops from the nation in violation

of the international agreement of "no negotiations with a terrorist group." We expect that the ROK's assistance to Afghanistan this time will become an opportunity to correct such error and restore our national dignity. We also hope that the Democratic Party will change its stance in a more forward-looking manner.

On November 25, the ROK joined the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and, this year, the nation is expected to become the world's ninth largest exporter, according to the volume of exports. In less than a year we will host the G20 summit. We believe that, in order to raise its international standing, the ROK should also assume its share of the burden to provide aid to Afghanistan, in both its quality and quantity.

OBAMA'S WRONG AFGHAN STRATEGY AND ROK'S CHOICE
(Hankyoreh Shinmun, December 2, 2009, Page 31)

U.S. President Barack Obama has decided that the final step in the U.S.'s Afghanistan strategy will be to greatly increase the number of troops in the country. Having given serious thought to several options, Obama has decided on a new strategy that would reinforce troop strength in the country by (an additional) 34,000 troops, and informed relevant nations of this yesterday. (In the debate) between the hard-line faction in the U.S, centered in the military, that called for an increase in military intervention, and the moderates, represented by the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, that

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called for boosting civilian cooperation (in lieu of sending in additional troops), the hard-liners won in the end.

President Obama's choice is unrealistic and lacks justification. Historically, although Afghanistan has been invaded several times by major powers like Great Britain and the Soviet Union, it has never surrendered. The U.S. likewise has been waging war for eight years after attacking the country to punish al-Qaida and the Taliban government following the terrorist attacks of Sept 11, 2001. It has yet been able to mop up al-Qaida and instead has simply transformed the entire country into a war zone. The indiscriminate U.S. military campaign in Afghanistan has bred Taliban forces and turned all Afghan people into an enemy. In particular, by supporting a corrupt local government and playing it off against resisting forces, the U.S. is making the Afghan war into a second Vietnam War. Isn't this why Karl Eikenberry, a retired U.S. Lieutenant-General and current U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, publicly said that troop increases will only invite resistance from Afghans and that civilian workers should be dispatched instead?

U.S. allies meanwhile are showing cool responses. Only Great Britain said it would immediately send 500 more troops, while France, Australia and Germany have taken a negative attitude towards boosting troop strength. Japan also said it plans to terminate its refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, which ends in January, and concentrate instead on giving financial aid. This is because they believe that Obama's decision will not be able to resolve the problems in Afghanistan. In spite of this, our government has decided to send 130 Provincial Reconstruction Team personnel and 400 troops to protect them, and soon plans to submit a deployment approval bill to the National Assembly. After Australia and Sweden, this would be the largest deployment of troops by a nation without direct interests in Afghanistan. The ROKG should reconsider its plan to redeploy Korean troops to the war torn country.

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.)

STEPHENS